

A Biography of Roger Greenberg

**Final Paper
SAXO 922 Seminar in Performance
Instructed by:
Vince Gnojek - Professor of Saxophone
Department of Music
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Assignment:

Choose three major classical saxophone performers/teachers who are still living. Write a biographical sketch of each and describe their contributions to the saxophone community. Include performances, reviews, discography, compositions dedicated to them, teaching accomplishments, awards and competitions. Students can do this on one person rather than three if they choose to do a personal or phone interview as part of the research. However, the paper should still be 20-30 pages in length.

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Roger D. Greenberg (born 1944)

Roger Greenberg is a saxophonist and Professor of Music at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado. He was born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania in 1944 and raised in Reading, and later Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His father was a baker by trade and his mother was a homemaker. Though neither were musicians, both were very supportive of Roger's interests, paying for his lessons, purchasing recordings, shuttling him to every rehearsal and attending nearly every concert he performed. He gives them the credit for his early success on saxophone.

According to Roger, in 1951 (at the age of seven) he was listening to the radio in the Redding home and was very impressed with a performance by local saxophonist Kenneth Blekicki. At Roger's urging, his mother immediately purchased him a curved soprano saxophone and arranged for private instruction with Blekicki's teacher, saxophonist Sam Correnti.

About a year later Correnti organized his ten best students into a group known as the *Saxatones*; Blekicki was also a member of this group. The *Saxatones* played music of all styles and often performed on a local television show called *The Children's*. Although Greenberg didn't receive musical training at school until he entered Southwest Junior High, he credits his band director, J. Carl Borelli, as "influential." Roger says that both Correnti and Borelli, "...instilled a strong sense of discipline and kept me excited about the saxophone."

In 1958 the Greenberg family moved to Philadelphia. Roger was then fourteen years old. After inquiries, he quickly became a student of eighty-year old Michael Guerra, a retired clarinetist and saxophonist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Although Guerra had quit playing due to a heart condition, he came highly recommended as an instructor. Quickly Greenberg became tremendously inspired and influenced by Guerra's teaching.

In the early 1960's Roger began a professional performing career. While still in high school he began playing in a band with Mike Pedicin, Jr. (Today Pedicin is a well-known saxophonist on the East Coast.) This group mostly performed at bars and nightclubs in the Philadelphia and Atlantic City area. After his graduation Roger joined a band called *The Dumonts*. They were hired to backup a variety Rock & Roll show headlined by the pop group, the *Four Seasons*. The show also included performances by *Ruby and the Romantics*, *Jimmy Soul*, *Patty and the Emblems*, and the *Chiffons*.

Other early professional experiences included a tour of the Northeast with Warren Covington directing the *Tommy Dorsey Band*, as well as experience with the CBS-TV

Orchestra in Philadelphia. These early experiences with popular music were leading Roger toward a career as a professional freelance saxophonist on the East Coast. As a young professional he also continued his lessons with Guerra. By this time Guerra had become Roger's good friend and mentor. Sensing Roger was ready for further study, he suggested an audition for the Juilliard School of Music.

In 1964 Roger was accepted into Juilliard and began studying with Joe Allard. Allard became another mentor in Roger's life. Greenberg says, "He was a master teacher who always had a solution for a problem. Aside from my becoming a better player, the pedagogical techniques I learned from Joe Allard will be a part of my teaching style forever."

As a student at Juilliard, Roger also co-lead the Jazz Ensemble with Kirk Nurock. Although the jazz ensemble wasn't part of the official curriculum, this group included many fine musicians, notably: Jerry Weiss and Chuck Winfield on trumpets, and Bob Steen, Dave Tofani, and Billy Kerr on saxophones. Hal Overton, professor of composition, was their sponsor. Overton was Roger's music theory instructor, and a gifted jazz pianist and composer who did several arrangements for Thelonious Monk's big band.

Before he could complete his baccalaureate at Juilliard, Roger was drafted into the Army. This was in 1966 during the Viet Nam conflict. Preferring to stay in the New York area, he auditioned for the West Point Band and his acceptance forced enlistment. West Point guaranteed he would stay on the East Coast, but it also kept him in the military longer than a regular draftee. The West Point move was a fortunate turn of events. During his tenure Greenberg began to specialize on the tenor saxophone. Along with Marshall Taylor, Emmett Yoshioka, and Harvey Pittel, he became a member of the West Point Saxophone Quartet. This was an excellent group, and Roger credits this quartet experience for changing his focus from studio playing to classical saxophone.

Upon an honorable discharge from the Army, he returned to his studies at Juilliard and began performing in the music circuit of the Catskill Mountains. This included gigs in the “dreaded bungalow colonies” and a stint on lead alto in the show band at Grossinger’s Hotel. In 1970 Roger completed his Bachelor of Music degree at the Juilliard School of Music. This was also the year he first heard Jean-Marie Londeix perform the premier of Edison Denisov's *Sonata* at the World Saxophone Congress in Chicago, Illinois. This performance left a lasting impression and Roger knew that he would eventually have to study with the great Londeix.

That same year Harvey Pittel took up the position as Instructor of Saxophone at the University of Southern California. Greenberg and Yoshioka soon relocated to Los Angeles. The three invited Victor Morosco to join them on soprano saxophone and the ensemble became the Los Angeles Saxophone Quartet. The L. A. Saxophone Quartet made recordings of the Jean Rivier's *Grave et Presto*, Alfred Desenclos' *Quatour de Saxophones*, and Alexander Glazunov's *Quator for Saxophone Quartet*. Accompanied by drummer, Shelley Manne and bassist, Monty Budwig, they made a recording of Lennie Niehaus arrangements of *There Will Never be Another You* and *Have You Met Miss Jones*. About the same time they also made a recording of *Three Times Four* by Donal Michalsky. The printed version of this piece is available through Shawnee Music Press Recordings. Undoubtedly the greatest achievement of the L. A. Saxophone Quartet was their transcription and recording of J. S. Bach’s, *The Art of the Fugue* (Protone Records, LP S146 - re-released on compact disc in 1994). This recording brought the group ‘virtuosic’ notoriety.

Wanting to enhance his saxophone skills and increase his collegiate credentials, Greenberg began studying with Harvey Pittel at University of Southern California in 1971, and received his Master of Music degree there in 1973. 1973 was also the year Roger married Sylvia Greenfield. Roger remembers, "We met in a bar where she was

playing flute with a harpist in Marina del Rey, California. Sylvia has been extremely understanding and supportive about my musical experience."

After 1973, Roger credits Harvey Pittel as instrumental in getting him his first part-time teaching jobs. During this period (1973-1980) Roger taught saxophone periodically at Long Beach State University, San Diego State University, California State University in Fullerton, the University of Southern California, and the California Institute of Technology.

In 1990 Roger said of his former teacher,

"Harvey Pittel is an amazing musician who has come closer than anyone in the world to making classical saxophone a success with the general public."¹

As a freelance saxophonist Roger made several classical recordings during his tenure in Los Angeles. In 1972 he made a recording with Peter Christ's group entitled, *The Westwood Woodwind Quintet Plays Music by Cortez, Chavez, Revueltas and Ginastera* (Crystal Records - S 812 - 1973, Peter Christ, proprietor). This album contains several works for non-standard woodwind quintet combinations. Roger played baritone saxophone on Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas' (1899-1940) *Two Little Serious Pieces for Piccolo, Oboe, Clarinet, Trumpet, and Baritone Saxophone*. Other members of the quintet featured, Gretel Shanley - flute, Peter Christ - oboe, David Atkins - clarinet, and Thomas Stevens - trumpet. In 1975 he made a recording of *Concerto for Piano and Band* by Raynor Brown (WIM Records). It was probably at this session that he first met and befriended the composer William Schmidt.

Roger also performed for television and motion pictures in Los Angeles area. He was on the recording session for *The Towering Inferno* soundtrack, written and conducted by John Williams for Warner Brothers. In 1978 Roger recorded for Jerry Goldsmith on the soundtrack of *The Swarm*, which was also done for Warner Brothers. Roger

¹ Saxophone Symposium, Vol. 15, No. 3, November/December 1990.

performed many times with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and in 1976 they recorded *American Life* by Adolph Weiss (New World Records).

As a soloist Roger made several significant performances during this period. In 1974 he performed at the World Saxophone Congress in Bordeaux, France. In 1975, the Composer George Huessenstamm (b.1926) dedicated his *Four Miniatures* to Greenberg. The work for violin, flute, and tenor saxophone, was premiered on May 27th, 1976, and is still available through Dorn Publications. On April 29th, 1978 Roger premiered *Different Callings* for saxophone, piano, percussion, and electronics, dedicated to him by composer Keith Clark.

During the latter part of the 1970's, the Greenberg's began their family. In 1976 their first child, daughter Jennie, was born in Santa Monica, California. She has since Graduated from the University of Northern Colorado with a double major in Drama and Speech Communication. She was married in March 2003 and now works as an event planner in the San Diego area. In 1977 their son Danny was born. He will graduate from the University of Colorado in May of 2003 and plans to start law school in San Diego in the fall. In terms of his career, Roger says of his children, "My kids didn't really change my career path, but probably gave me a different perspective on life that definitely influenced my career."²

In 1978 the L.A. Saxophone Quartet disbanded, concurrently Roger was appointed the Saxophone Instructor at the University of Northern Colorado, in Greeley, Colorado. The tenure-track position provided him with financial stability and artistic freedom, allowing Roger to explore several different avenues simultaneously. Recording, performance, teaching, scholarly writing, arranging, and professional development all became part of Greenberg's daily life.

² Email correspondence, April 29th, 2003.

Harvey Pittel reorganized the saxophone quartet under his own name in 1979, and released *The Harvey Pittel Saxophone Quartet* on Crystal Records (S 155). Roger is still playing tenor saxophone in this group.

During 1980 William Schmidt dedicated his *Sonata for Baritone Saxophone and Piano*, and composer Andrew Charlton dedicated his *Diversions for Flute and Saxophone* to Greenberg. Both works were premiered on Roger's recital on March 5th.

At Northern Colorado Roger began publishing saxophone transcriptions of classic works, something he still enjoys. In May of 1981 he adapted *The Swan* of Camille Saint-Saens, for tenor saxophone and piano, and later that year he did saxophone quartet transcriptions of J. S. Bach's *Air from Orchestral Suite No. 3*, and Eric Satie's *Gymnopedie*. All are published by Western International Music (WIM), which is owned by William Schmidt.

During this time Roger strengthened his ties with the North American Saxophone Alliance, becoming director of Region II (California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Hawaii, and Colorado) of this organization. He also began reviewing publications of new saxophone works for their quarterly publication *The Saxophone Symposium*. Since his initial 1974 performance at the World Saxophone Congress in Bordeaux, France, Roger has performed at many of the Saxophone Congress meetings, including the events held in, Illinois, Japan, and Montreal. His most recent performance was in Minneapolis during 2003.

In 1980 *The Art of the Tenor Saxophone* (vol. 1 – WIMR 18) was released. It features Roger playing the music of William Schmidt, accompanied by Sharon Davis, piano, James Rötter, tenor saxophone, Barry Silverman, percussion, the Westwood Wind Quintet. Recently re-released on CD (WIM 131), three new recordings of Schmidt's works were added to the original. This was Roger's first of several recordings of music by William Schmidt, marking the beginning of a fairly close association between the two

men. In fact, Schmidt relocated to Greeley, Colorado in 1987. Their most recent pairing was on Schmidt's work, *Five*.

In 1981 Schmidt dedicated another major composition to Roger, the *Concerto for Tenor Saxophone and Symphonic Winds*. Roger premiered and recorded the 14' work in April of the year with the U.N.C. Wind Ensemble directed by Eugene Corporon (originally released on Soundmark Records, November 1981). This *Concerto* recording was included on the re-release of *The Art of the Tenor Saxophone*. In its entirety, the CD also includes Schmidt's *Sonatina for Tenor Saxophone and Piano*, the *Jazz Suite for Saxophone Duet and Percussion*, the *Suite (from Music for Unaccompanied Saxophone)*, the *Sonata for Tenor Saxophone and Piano*, and the *Sonatina for Tenor Saxophone and Woodwind Quintet*. This recording and all of the printed music is available from WIM Music.

In 1982, colleague Evan Copley (b.1930), professor of composition and music theory at the University of Northern Colorado, dedicated his *Trio for Saxophone, Horn, and Piano* to Roger. Concurrently, composer Bruce Yorko dedicated his *Night Dances* to Roger. This is a piece for soprano, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones, all played by the same performer. Roger premiered both of these works in recital on May 15th. The Harvey Pittel Saxophone Quartet also released *Don't You Remember the Time* (Harojama Records S155) in the same year.

After 1982 Roger returned to orchestral performing. With his work for the Los Angeles Philharmonic behind him, he became a saxophonist with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra (formerly the Denver Symphony Orchestra) in Denver, Colorado. Over the years he has kept a fairly regular schedule with them, and made a few notable recordings. In 1987 Roger played the soprano and tenor saxophone solos for the Denver Symphony Orchestra recording of Ravel's *Bolero* under the direction of Phillippe Entremont (Pro-Arte Compact Disc, 1987). In the same year he played alto and baritone saxophones on their recording of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue, American in*

Paris, and *Swanee* under the direction of Newton Waylon (Pro-Arte Compact Disc, 1987).

To date Roger has also made orchestral appearances with an impressive number of fine organizations, including the Aspen Festival Orchestra, the National Repertory Orchestra, the Rochester (N.Y.) Philharmonic Orchestra, the Sacramento Symphony Orchestra, the Rochester (Minnesota) Symphony Orchestra, and the Austin Symphony Orchestra. One especially memorable performance for Roger was when he was invited to perform Rimsky-Korsakov's arrangement of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* with the Florida Philharmonic in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Many of these orchestral performances were under the baton of great conductors, including, Zubin Mehta, Andre Previn, Michael Tilson Thomas, Phillippe Entremont, Luciano Berio, Leonard Slatkin, Yoel Levi, Yuri Temirkanov, Sixten Ehrling, Sergiu Comissiona, Geatano Delogu, and James DePriest.

Reflecting on his orchestral experiences Roger has said,

"I've been privileged to work under many fine conductors, but if I would have to single one out, it would be Michael Tilson Thomas. I played Berg's *Suite* from the opera *Lulu* with him conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and it was a fantastic experience. He is a fantastic conductor and he knows how to get the most out of an orchestra."³

Around 1987 Roger became eligible for sabbatical leave from U.N.C. There was no question for him that this was the time to study with Jean-Marie Londeix. In order to realize this dream, Greenberg had begun correspondence with Londeix two years prior to his scheduled 'leave.' When Londeix gave the 'go-ahead,' Roger submitted a proposal that outlined study with Londeix and the saxophone classes at the French National Conservatoire in Bordeaux, France. Anticipating approval, Roger took a French course in order to improve his understanding of the language. Once his leave was granted he went to France in 1988. After an arduous journey, Roger settled in and began studying.

Roger says of the experience,

"My educational experiences in Bordeaux occurred in four different ways. First, I had the opportunity to take several private lessons with Londeix. Second, because all lessons for regular conservatoire students are open to anyone who wants to attend, I was able to observe many hours of these lessons, as well as ensemble rehearsals. Third, between the saxophone music at the conservatoire and Londeix's personal library, I had access to what is perhaps the greatest collection of saxophone music in the world. Fourth, I attended several concerts of music for saxophone."⁴

Roger's saxophone lessons were held at Londeix's home. At every lesson Londeix wasted no time and "immediately got down to business." He was fastidious and demanding, especially focused on Roger's dynamics, note endings and articulations. Londeix's lessons typically began with scales, intervals, and arpeggios played over the entire range, incorporating a variety of articulations and rhythmic patterns. Often demonstrating on his saxophone, Londeix would sometimes play an octave lower or in harmony to emphasize problems with pitch. He also insisted that students understand the form of the piece they are working on, and that they practice with the piano score.

Though Londeix was "extremely intense," his teaching and performing techniques were enlightening and inspirational for Professor Greenberg. Roger noted that Londeix loves music of all styles, and encourages students to play music from every period; Londeix takes contemporary saxophone music as seriously as the traditional *standard* saxophone works, or saxophone transcriptions of the great classics. At a recital of former Londeix student, Jean-Michael Goutry, Roger heard a performance of a very 'contemporary' work, Christian Lauba's *Hard* for unaccompanied tenor saxophone.

Greenberg says,

"This was an absolutely stunning performance of a great work for saxophone. The work itself may be one of the most difficult in the saxophone repertoire, but it is without question worth the effort. Lauba's piece generates more excitement than perhaps any piece I've ever heard." Roger's summation of his Bordeaux experience is that "It exceeded my expectations. There are a thousand fantastic

³ Saxophone Journal, Vol. 15, No. 3, November/December 1990.

⁴ "A Sabbatic Leave in Bordeaux, France." Saxophone Symposium. Vol.XIV, No. 4, Fall 1989.

images that flash in my mind with those four simple words." ⁵

After returning from his sabbatical leave in 1989, Greenberg was revitalized. He quickly incorporated the scale routine he learned from Londeix, and initiated the French conservatory policy of open lessons. This policy has made an enormous impact on his U.N.C. students. Roger feels that they are better prepared by not wanting to be embarrassed in front of their peers; the students quickly become accustomed to an audience; the observers witness pedagogical techniques in action; the teacher being observed maintains a higher level of concentration.

In 1989 Roger arranged Eric Satie's *Gymnopedie* for soprano, alto, tenor, or baritone and piano. This arrangement is published by Dorn Publications in Medfield, Massachusetts. He has done several other arrangements with Dorn through the years. Dorn published Roger's arrangement of J. S. Bach's *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor* for saxophone quartet, and Gabriel Faure's *Clair de Lune*, arranged for Eb or Bb saxophone and piano in 1988. In 1991 they published Roger's arrangement of Faure's *Pavane*, arranged for Eb or Bb saxophone and piano.

In 1993 Roger recorded a work for composer Max Stern entitled *Rainbow*. This is a work for seven saxophones parts all performed by Greenberg, and released on a CD of Stern's material entitled *Haazinu* (Israel Broadcasting Authority CD, 1993). In 1994 the Harvey Pittel Quartet released *It Might as Well be Spring*, featuring works by Bach, Romero, Scarlatti, Rodgers & Hart, Rimsky-Korsakov, Phil Woods, and Rodgers & Hammerstein. In December of 1995 they recorded *Live in Chicago* (Mark Custom Recording Service in 1996 - MCD-2106), at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. This quartet featured Vincent Gnojek on alto, Todd Oxford on baritone, as well as Harvey, soprano, and Roger on tenor. It contains an extremely diverse selection of music including works by Phil Woods, Johnny Green, J.S. Bach, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Camille Saint-Saens, Rodgers and Hart, Rimsky-Korsakov, Paul

⁵ "A Sabbatic Leave in Bordeaux, France." Saxophone Symposium. Vol.XIV, No. 4, Fall 1989.

Desmond, Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, Maurice Ravel, and Heitor Villa-Lobos. Both CD's are available from Dorn Publications.

In 1995 Roger was in his 16th year of teaching at U.N.C. His second sabbatical came up, and he took a leave to study jazz improvisation. Since Roger had grown up listening to jazz and popular music, he still had a strong interest in non-classical saxophone. Noting that many of his students were playing jazz at a very high level, Roger wanted to update his understanding.

He says,

“I actually felt like something very important was missing from my life, and I finally decided that the only answer was for me to get back into jazz, for my sake as well as the students.”⁶

Roger planned his sabbatical in three parts. First he began preliminary studies at his home, then he went to New York for intensive study, and finally he returned home for a period of incorporation. Phase one was done at home. Doing all of his work on tenor saxophone, using an Otto Link #7 mouthpiece, he began practicing numerous scale exercises with Jamey Aebersold and Ramon Ricker books, and playing transcribed solos. He also did hours of intensive listening to the great jazz players. What he accomplished during this phase was to develop a basic jazz vocabulary and a style.

In phase two of his leave, Roger went to New York to study with Jimmy Heath, Ken Hitchcock, and Allen Won. New York is a vital scene for jazz, and Roger chose these three musicians for different reasons. Won is the saxophone professor at Mannes College of Music, and is fluent in both jazz and classical saxophone. Jimmy Heath is one of Roger's favorite saxophonists (Roger first heard him in high school) and a musician with a direct connection to all the great jazz saxophone masters. Ken Hitchcock is a great performer who studied with Jerry Bergonzi and, like Roger, also graduated from Juilliard. Under their tutelage, Roger began a practice routine that averaged six hours per day. He worked scales and arpeggios in all keys and in all inversions, applying these to different

tunes, and using the metronome on beats two and four (swing emphasis). He also began practicing patterns in all keys, and began learning tunes in every key as well. He spent countless hours working on blues ‘changes’ and the chord progression to *I’ve Got Rhythm*, writing many of his own tunes based on these progressions.

During the final phase of his leave, Roger returned to Colorado and made his jazz debut in a recital at U.N.C. After four months of study Roger had this to say about the future of his jazz playing,

“I am certain there will be many future jazz performances . . . as an addition to my classical playing . . . I am now convinced that you can do both, and that one benefits the other. Playing jazz can give an aggressive, uninhibited approach to your classical playing. It also makes you listen to melody, harmony, time, and rhythm on a different level. On the other hand, playing classical saxophone will certainly give better technical control to any jazz player. Just remember to put on the right hat when it comes to tone quality, vibrato, and articulation, the three major differences in classical and jazz saxophone.”⁷

In 1996 Roger made one of his six trips to Thailand, taking part in a recording of *Long Live the Great King* with the Thailand Saxophone Orchestra. The piece was conducted by Eugene Corporon, and released on a Thai label. The King of Thailand is an avid saxophonist and this recording is a tribute to his enthusiasm for the saxophone.

In 2000 Roger began MonteVerde Music, which exclusively publishes his arrangements and transcriptions of saxophone music. I find the choice of the company name interesting, as its English translation means ‘Mountain Green or Glen,’ thus the connection to Greenberg as well as the revolutionary Italian Opera composer Claudio MonteVerdi (1567-1643). Currently MonteVerde Music publishes; *Kol Nidre* by Max Bruch, arranged for tenor saxophone and piano; *Arrival Platform* by Percy Grainger, arranged for unaccompanied saxophone; *Arioso* by J. S. Bach, arranged for tenor saxophone and piano; Sergei Rachmaninov’s, *Andante* from the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, arranged for tenor saxophone and piano; *Vivace* from the *Sonata No. 3* by J. S. Bach, arranged for tenor saxophone and piano. Additionally, Roger has also published

⁶ “Jazz Sabbatical Enhances Skills” article from [NASA Update](#). September/October 1998.

his book on wind instrument pedagogy entitled *Musicianship for Wind Players*. This book covers thoroughly all aspects of wind instrument study and performance, and is also available from MonteVerde.

As an instructor of saxophone, Roger has been very successful at the University of Northern Colorado. He teaches performance and music education majors at the undergraduate level, and also works with Masters and Doctoral students. His entire teaching load is in the applied area and he averages around twenty-five saxophone majors.⁸ Generally he also has a teaching assistant who handles an additional four or five students. Typically he coaches four to seven saxophone quartets in conjunction with the other woodwind faculty. He also participates on university and departmental committees and does student advising.

In order to stay in "shape," Roger does at least one recital every year that includes new works or works that he's never performed. For example, in 1990 Roger gave a solo saxophone recital, and also gave performances of Claude T. Smiths' *Fantasia*, P. M. Dubois' *Concerto* with a U.N.C. ensemble, A. Glazounov's *Concerto* with the Greeley Chamber Orchestra, and William Schmidt's *Tenor Concerto* with the United States Navy Band. In programming music he tries to keep an open mind and is interested in contemporary music, however, he has become more discriminating over the years.

In regards to many of the newer works for saxophone he said in a 1990 interview,

“ . . . if we look at the last ten (years) there are some important works for saxophone that stand out. But when we compare these pieces to the great works on other instruments not limited to the last ten years, their importance diminishes. This is not to say that we should give up on new works for saxophone. Great works inevitably be will written. Incidentally, I have no aversion to playing transcriptions of great works. In fact, I believe this is good for the saxophone. It favorably reaches an audience which might otherwise show no interest in the saxophone.”⁹

⁷ “Jazz Sabbatical Enhances Skills” article from *NASA Update*. September/October 1998.

⁸ Currently Roger has twenty-two students in his saxophone studio. Although not all are hour lessons, he says it is a very talented class.

⁹ *Saxophone Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 3, November/December 1990.

In addressing the state of the classical saxophone, Roger thinks things are getting better. He feels that until the emphasis of classical music shifts from the music of pre-saxophone eras, the saxophone will continue to struggle for acceptance. Even so, things are better than ever. Performers are much better and the pedagogy has improved.

College and university saxophone programs are pervasive.

"We're talking about an instrument that at 150 years old is just a baby compared to the other orchestral instruments. We also missed out on original works by many of the great masters. Works by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and a handful of others make up probably ninety-five per cent of the most frequently performed music by the world's most successful performers. We do have several very good concertos and other works for saxophone, but they are twentieth century works, which unfortunately appeal to a limited audience. I think for the classical saxophone to really succeed with the general public, (that) someone will have to achieve *star* status. As it stands right now (1990) there are performers ready, but with our existing repertoire, the audiences are not ready. I believe that someone will eventually succeed and that it will be relatively soon"¹⁰

Roger's teaching philosophy is succinct. "Students deserve more than just a demonstration, although that is important. An explanation and a plan of attack are essential." Roger expects that his students will achieve the highest musical standards, and says that the standards seem to increase with each passing year. As a classical saxophonist at one of the nation's top rated jazz schools, Roger concentrates on fundamentals, most of which apply to any style of saxophone performance. He does not recommend changing the mouthpiece for jazz or classical playing, but not the embouchure. Again, Roger maintains that the biggest differences between jazz and classical music is tone quality, articulation and vibrato. He advocates developing a conceptual approach to playing through developing technical control necessitated by a wide range of styles.

At the University of Northern Colorado he has taught hundreds of students. Several have won prestigious competitions and awards, and many have gone on to

professional performing careers. Several of his graduates have their own college or university saxophone positions. Among these former students are; Kim Gast at St. Cloud State University; Debra McKim at Hastings College; Kelley Hart Jenkins at San Diego State University; John Webb at the University of Texas at Tyler; Virginia Ayoob at California State University - Humboldt; Michael Cox at Capital State University; Sam Fagaly at Eastern Illinois State University; Perry Rask at Millikin University; Farrell Vernon at Indiana University at Purdue. Other notable teachers and performers who have studied saxophone with Roger include: Steve Owen, Dan Gailey, Dr. Jeff Benedict, Jill Geist, Alan Zurcher, Brian Lydeen, Sugree Charoensook of Thailand, Rex Matzke, Tracy Heavner, Kerry Hart, Dan Goble, C.J. Coker, Cynthia Mullis, Todd Wilkinson, and Bob Kleinschmidt.

In 2002 Roger Greenberg was named *College Scholar of the Year* at the University of Northern Colorado. He has most recently finished a one semester sabbatical project on Latin American music for the saxophone. His research generated a listing of five hundred compositions, by country and composer. Though much of the music he uncovered is unpublished, Roger hopes that others will come forward with new materials. Perhaps their research may uncover some valuable Latin American music in libraries in the United States and abroad. We can look forward to the publication of the listing.

For many years Greenberg has also been an artist clinician for the Selmer Company. He plays Selmer instruments and mouthpieces exclusively in the classical format, although he changes mouthpieces for his jazz playing. Of the instruments he owns he's most comfortable on his Selmer Mark VI tenor saxophone. His preference for classical reeds is 'Traditional' Vandoren #5. For his jazz set-up he prefers either Vandoren Java #3 1/2, or Rico #3 1/2 or #4.

¹⁰ Saxophone Journal, Vol. 15, No. 3, November/December 1990.

Currently Roger has eighteen nationally or internationally distributed recordings to his credit and he is still performing with the Harvey Pittel Saxophone Quartet. He has performed professionally in 46 of the United States, as well as Mexico, Europe, Asia, and South America. Roger's recent performances include recitals in Lima Peru; Lisbon, Portugal; Bangkok, Hawaii, and Mexico. He continues his teaching at the University of Northern Colorado and remains active nationally as a soloist and clinician. His wife Sylvia also teaches at U.N.C. Roger says he will continue performing and teaching until, "it's no longer any fun." In his spare time he has developed a passion for golf.

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